

cellulosic fibres; (ii) leading the fibres through a precipitating bath; (iii) cutting the fibres to form a fleece; (iv) passing the fleece through a series of wash baths, wherein (a) the wash baths are connected one to the other, (b) fresh washing liquor is applied to the last wash bath and led in countercurrent with the transportation direction of the fleece; and (c) the pH value of each of said wash baths is maintained higher than 8.5; and (v) drying the washed fleece.

2. (amended) The process according to claim 1 wherein the pH value of each of the wash baths is maintained between 9 and 11.

3. (amended) The process according to either claim 1 or 2 wherein the pH value in the wash baths is set by adding alkaline buffering substances.

4. (amended) The process according to claim 3 wherein sodium hydroxide is added to at least one of the wash baths.

5. (amended) The process according to claim 1 wherein liquor is forced out of the fibre fleece after the fleece leaves the wash bath and before the fleece enters the following wash bath.

6. (amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the temperature of the washing liquor equals 20°C to 90° C.

Please add the following new claims:

7. (new) The process according to claim 2 wherein liquor is forced out of the fibre fleece after the fleece leaves the wash bath and before the fleece enters the following wash bath.

8. (new) The process according to claim 3 wherein liquor is forced out of the fibre fleece after the fleece leaves the wash bath and before the fleece enters the following wash bath.

9. (new) The process according to claim 4 wherein liquor is forced out of the fibre fleece after the fleece leaves the wash bath and before the fleece enters the following wash bath.

10. (amended) The process of claim 2 wherein the temperature of the washing liquor equals 20°C to 90° C.

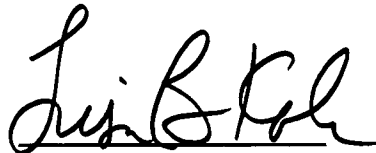
11. (amended) The process of claim 3 wherein the temperature of the washing liquor equals 20°C to 90° C.

12. (amended) The process of claim 4 wherein the temperature of the washing liquor equals 20°C to 90° C.

13. (amended) The process of claim 5 wherein the temperature of the washing liquor equals 20°C to 90° C.

An early allowance is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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